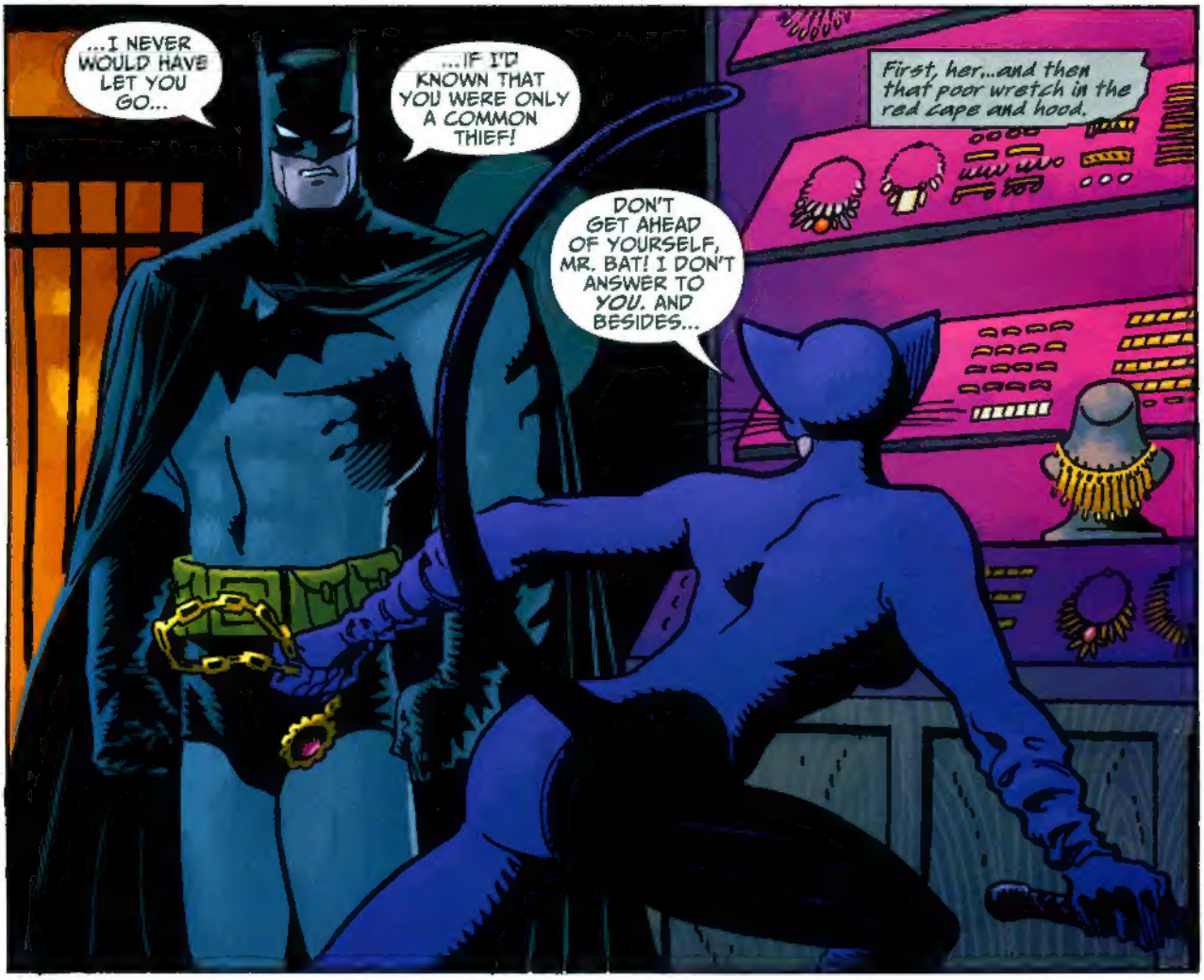
DARK MOON RISING
BATMAN
and the MAD MONK
1
FIRST ISSUE OF SIX
OCT '06
MATT WAGNER
DIRECT SALES
$3.50 US $4.75 CAN
dccomics.com

Have I inspired this?
Once before, I encountered this...CAT-WOMAN. She wears a costume. And a mask.
I CAN SEE I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU. THAT NIGHT, ON THE ROMAN'S ROOFTOP...
HSSSSS--
MATT WAGNER
·STORY & ART·
DAVE STEWART
·COLORS·
ROB LEIGH
·LETTERS·
BRANDON MONTCLARE
·ASST. EDITOR·
BOB SCHRECK
·EDITOR·
BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE

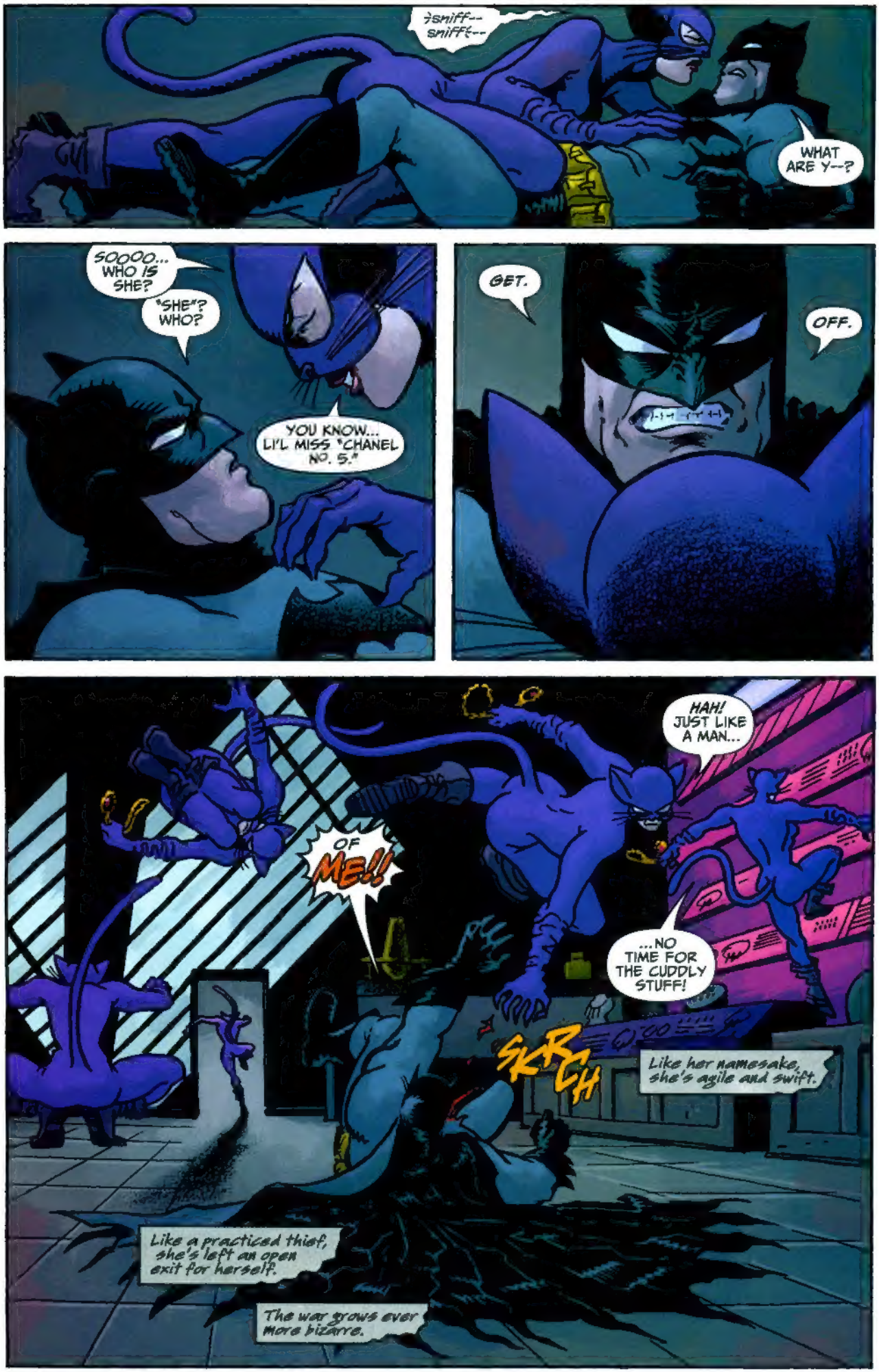

...I NEVER WOULD HAVE LET YOU GO...
...IF I'D KNOWN THAT YOU WERE ONLY A COMMON THIEF!
DON'T GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF, MR. BAT! I DON'T ANSWER TO YOU. AND BESIDES...
First, her...and then that poor wretch in the red cape and hood.

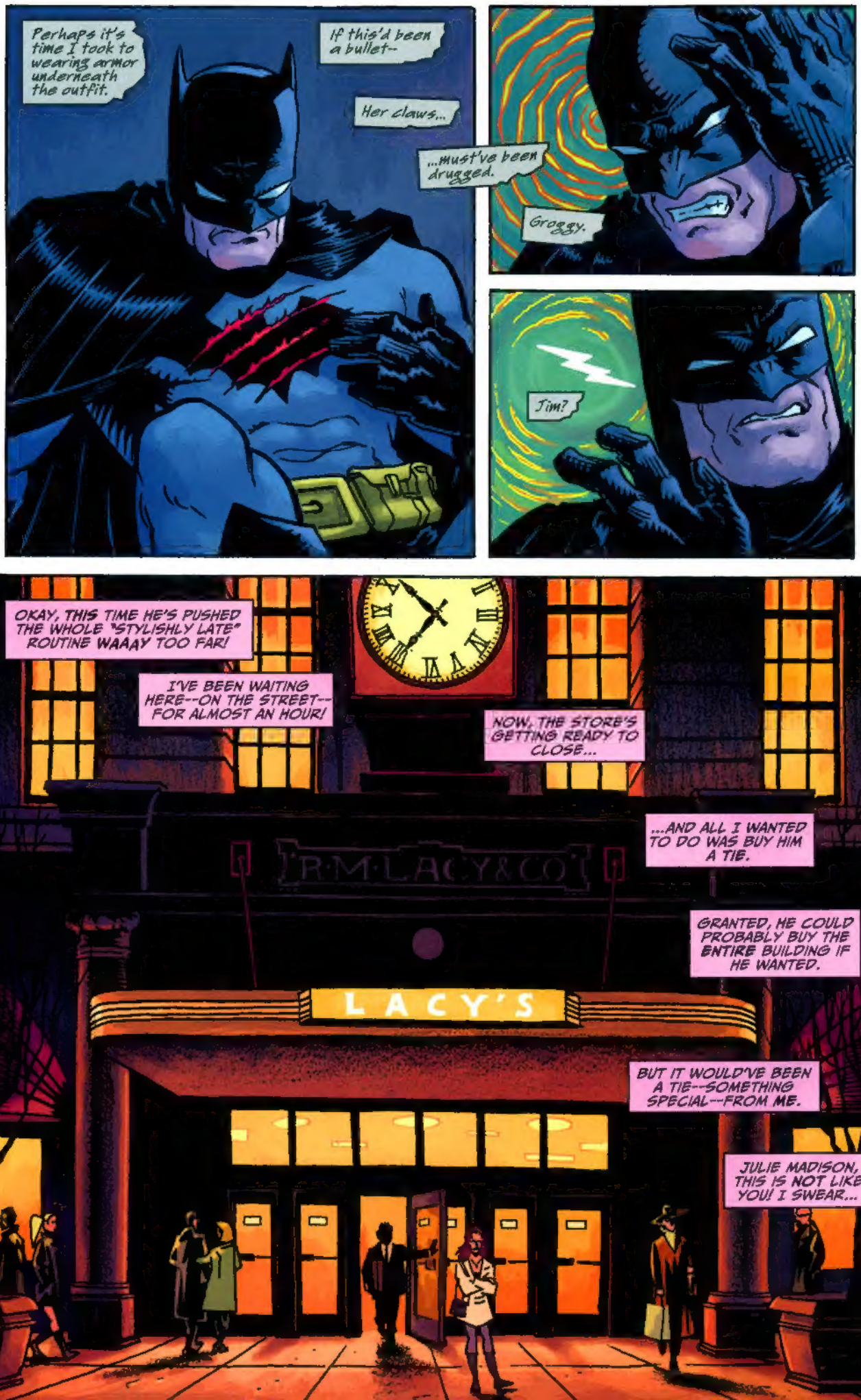
KRAK
...EVER TRIED TO CATCH A CAT...

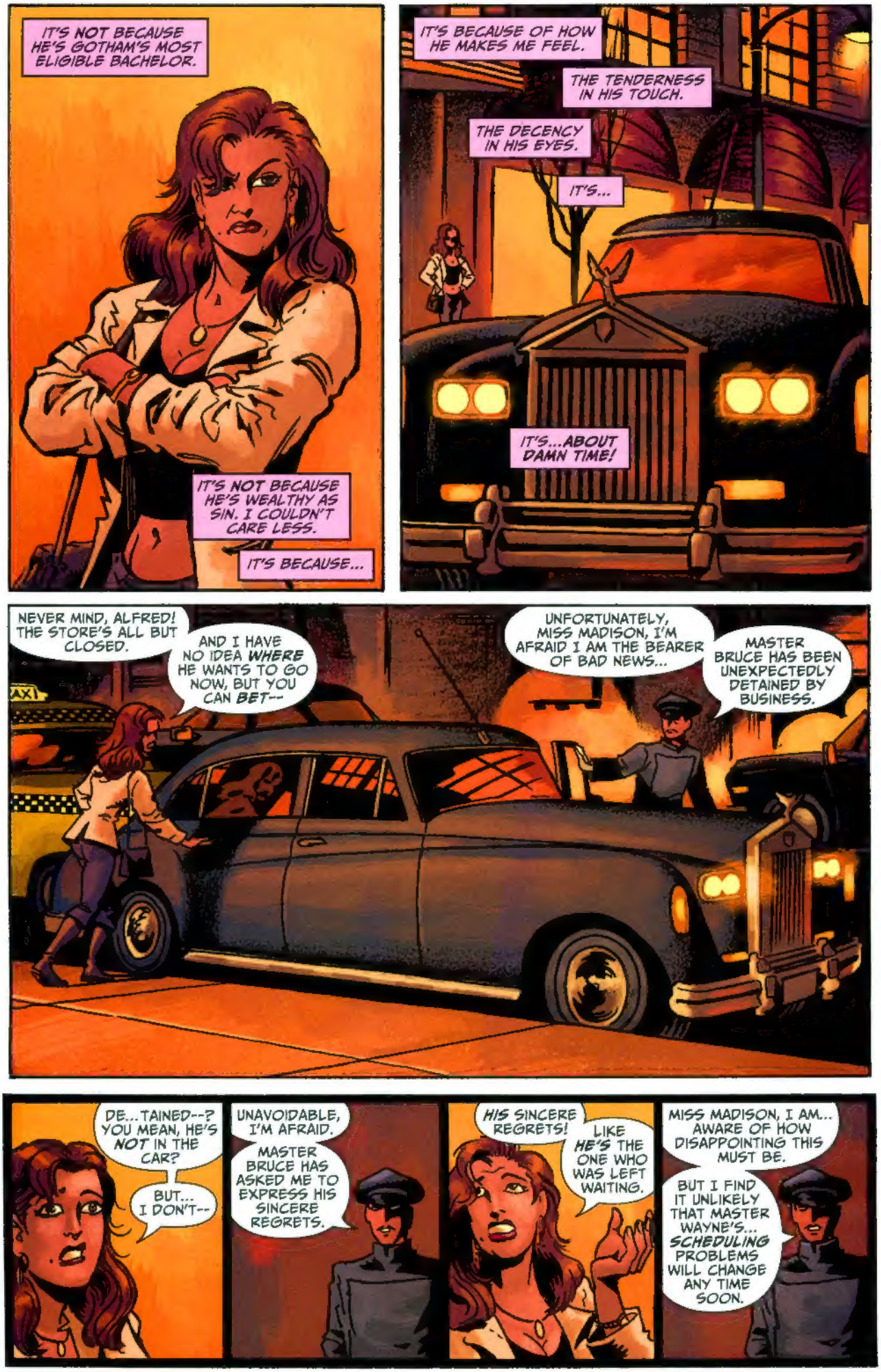
Have I inadvertently given license to every crook with a flair for the dramatic?
SCHKK

...THAT DIDN'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT?

WAK
UNHH--!


sniff--
sniff--
WHAT ARE Y--?
SOOOO... WHO IS SHE?
"SHE"? WHO?
YOU KNOW... LI'L MISS "CHANEL NO. 5."
GET.
OFF.
HAH! JUST LIKE A MAN...
OF ME!!
...NO TIME FOR THE CUDDLY STUFF!
SKRCH
Like her namesake, she's agile and swift.
Like a practiced thief, she's left an open exit for herself.
The war grows ever more bizarre.


Perhaps it's time I took to wearing armor underneath the outfit.
If this'd been a bullet--
Her claws...
...must've been drugged.
Groggy.
Jim?
OKAY, THIS TIME HE'S PUSHED THE WHOLE "STYLISHLY LATE" ROUTINE WAAAY TOO FAR!
I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE--ON THE STREET--FOR ALMOST AN HOUR!
NOW, THE STORE'S GETTING READY TO CLOSE...
...AND ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS BUY HIM A TIE.
GRANTED, HE COULD PROBABLY BUY THE ENTIRE BUILDING IF HE WANTED.
BUT IT WOULD'VE BEEN A TIE--SOMETHING SPECIAL--FROM ME.
JULIE MADISON, THIS IS NOT LIKE YOU! I SWEAR...
R·H·MACY&CO
LACY'S


IT'S NOT BECAUSE HE'S GOTHAM'S MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELOR.
IT'S NOT BECAUSE HE'S WEALTHY AS SIN. I COULDN'T CARE LESS.
IT'S BECAUSE...
IT'S BECAUSE OF HOW HE MAKES ME FEEL.
THE TENDERNESS IN HIS TOUCH.
THE DECENCY IN HIS EYES.
IT'S...
IT'S...ABOUT DAMN TIME!
NEVER MIND, ALFRED! THE STORE'S ALL BUT CLOSED.
AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE WANTS TO GO NOW, BUT YOU CAN BET--
UNFORTUNATELY, MISS MADISON, I'M AFRAID I AM THE BEARER OF BAD NEWS...
MASTER BRUCE HAS BEEN UNEXPECTEDLY DETAINED BY BUSINESS.
DE...TAINED--? YOU MEAN, HE'S NOT IN THE CAR?
BUT... I DON'T--
UNAVOIDABLE, I'M AFRAID.
MASTER BRUCE HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS SINCERE REGRETS.
HIS SINCERE REGRETS!
LIKE HE'S THE ONE WHO WAS LEFT WAITING.
MISS MADISON, I AM... AWARE OF HOW DISAPPOINTING THIS MUST BE.
BUT I FIND IT UNLIKELY THAT MASTER WAYNE'S... SCHEDULING PROBLEMS WILL CHANGE ANY TIME SOON.

IN THE MEANTIME, I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO CHAUFFEUR YOU WHEREVER YOU WOULD CARE TO--
THANK YOU, ALFRED, BUT NO! I THINK I'LL JUST WALK HOME INSTEAD.
TELL BRUCE... OOOOO--
JUST TELL HIM THAT I'LL CALL HIM TOMORROW.
VERY GOOD, MISS.
There's a certain expectancy-- a tightening in my spine-- every time I push the button on that "Bat" pager he gave me.
Its range can't be very far, especially among all these tall buildings.
So far, it's never failed, but...
...will this be the time he doesn't hear it?
Will this be the time he doesn't come?
Or can't...
WELL, WELL, CAPTAIN GORDON...
UP ON THE ROOF AGAIN, I SEE.

Jensen, Pulver and Briggs.
WORD IS, YOU SPEND A LOT OF TIME UP HERE, CAPTAIN.
QUITE THE SKYLINE VIEW, AIN'T IT?
Three of Grogan's strong-arm thugs.
JUST ENJOYING A SMOKE, SERGEANT.
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

NOTHING, SIR. I'D NEVER QUESTION YOUR MOTIVES... YOU BEIN' A CAPTAIN AND ALL.
BUT THE COMMISSIONER... NOW, HE--
COMMISSIONER GROGAN'S ALREADY SPOKEN TO ME, JENSEN.
WHAT MORE DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?
MAYBE MORE THAN YOU'RE COUNTIN' ON, JIMBO.
MAYBE A WHOLE LOT MORE...

They circle me wide-- hot, but wary.
They remember what happened to Flass.
I DOUBT YOU'VE GOT ANYTHING MORE THAN I EXPECT, JENSEN.
I don't give them time to react.
WE'LL JUST SEE ABOUT TH--

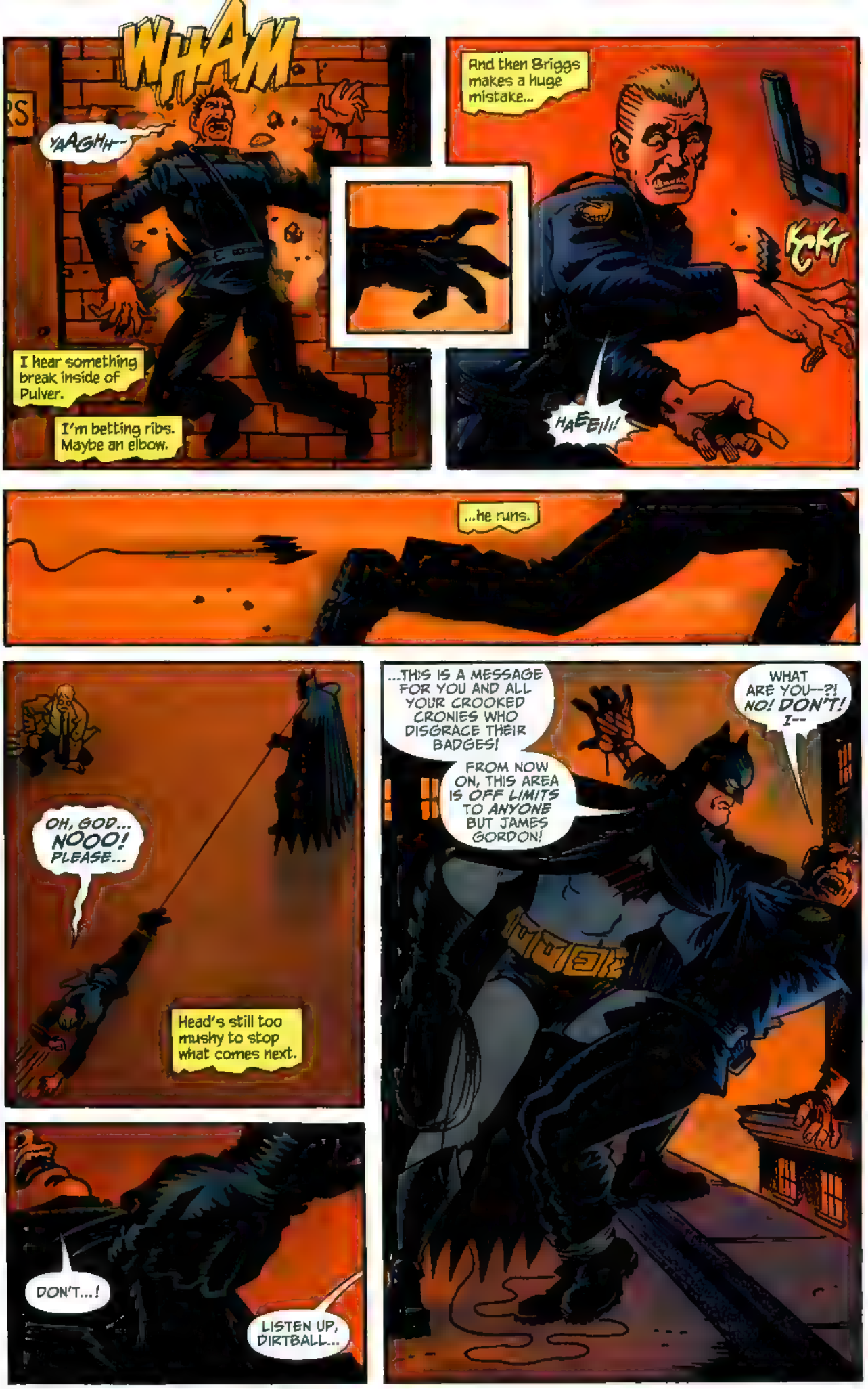
OOPH--
BNCH
They're big, but soft around the middle.

Slow.
KONK

Two are down before they even know what hit them.
The third one, Briggs, eats a chunk of my heel.
And then... it hits me.
CHAK
Damn.
KOFF KOFF KOFF KOFF
Stupid.
KOFF KOFF KOFF KOFF
Habit.
KRAK
ANGH!
TOUGH BREAK THERE, JIMBO. AIN'T YOU NEVER HEARD?
CIGARETTES ARE BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH.
REAL BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH.

Happens so fast...
His screams seem to keep rising up and up.
Nothing after. No fall.
He just disappears into the night sky.
IT'S... IT'S HIM!! MUST BE!!
WHAT TH--?!
Sets the other two off like a pair of jittery teenagers.
THAT'S WHAT GORDON WAS DOIN' ON THE ROOF!!
WAITIN' FOR HIM!!
BUT WH-WHERE IS HE?!!
So hopped up they don't even hear him coming.
Truth be told...
OHHH, GEEZUZ! WHERE IS HE?! WHERE--?
SHUT UP!
DON'T--
...neither do I.

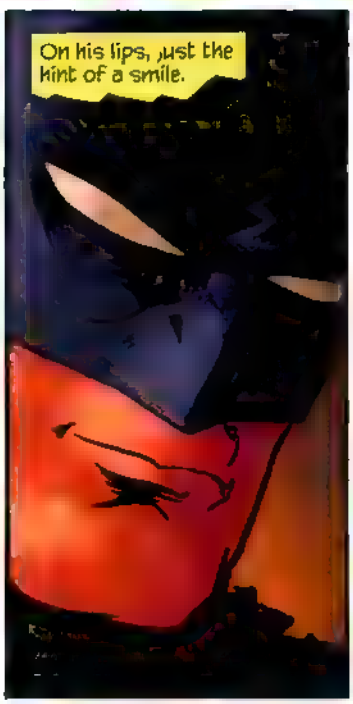
WAK
KRAK
It occurs to me that this is the first time.
The first time I've ever actually seen him in action. And again, he's fighting cops.
What the hell is wrong with this city?
CHOK
GRCK--
He's faster than anyone I've EVER seen.
Never falters.
Their weapons never come near him.
POW
CLPK
tsh...
KRNCH
NNHFF--


WHAM
YAAGHH--
I hear something break inside of Pulver.
I'm betting ribs. Maybe an elbow.
And then Briggs makes a huge mistake...
KCKT
HAEEIII!
...he runs.
OH, GOD... NOOO! PLEASE...
Head's still too mushy to stop what comes next.
...THIS IS A MESSAGE FOR YOU AND ALL YOUR CROOKED CRONIES WHO DISGRACE THEIR BADGES!
FROM NOW ON, THIS AREA IS OFF LIMITS TO ANYONE BUT JAMES GORDON!
WHAT ARE YOU--?! NO! DON'T! I--
DON'T...!
LISTEN UP, DIRTBALL...

YOU HEAR ME? FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY--
YES! NO! PLEASE--
--STAY OFF THE ROOF OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS!
YAAAAAAAAHHH!!
NO

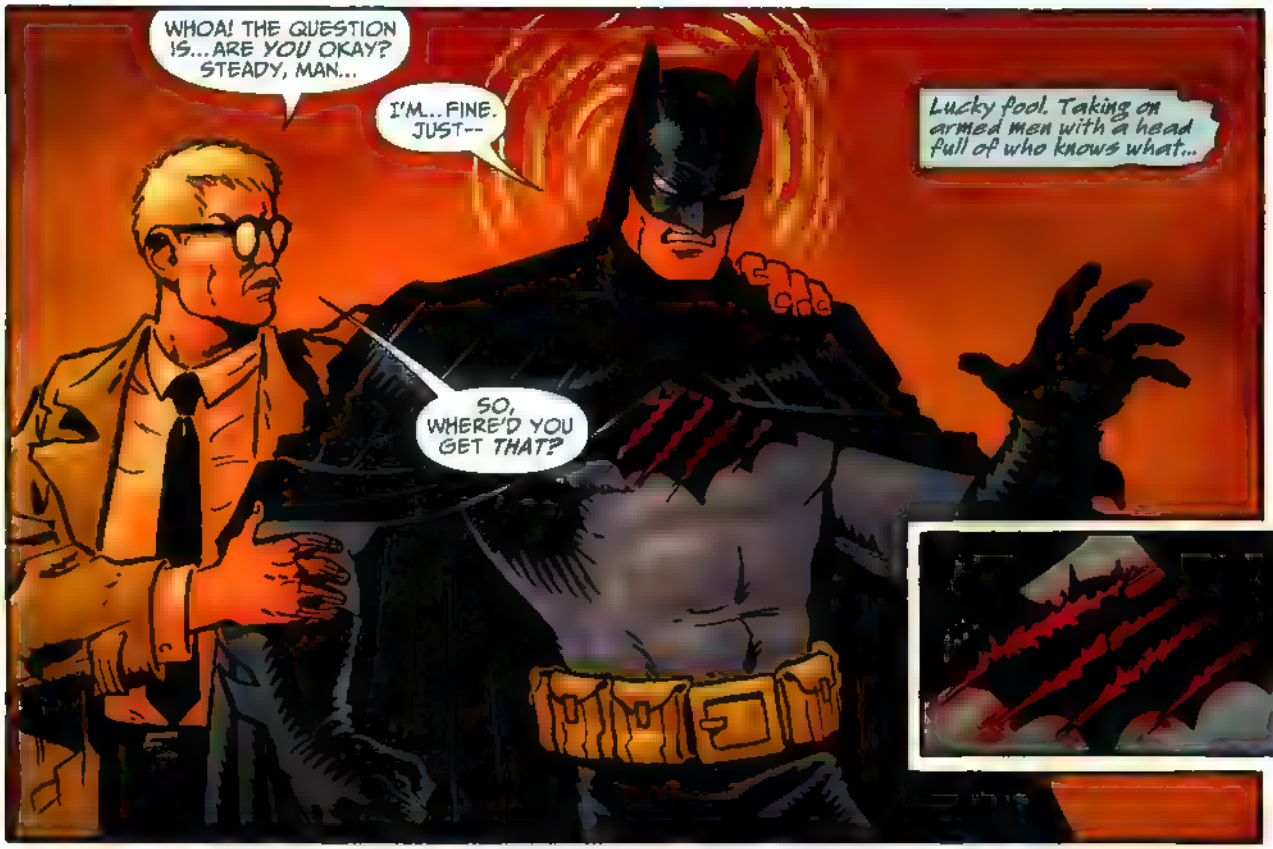
Of course, he doesn't let him fall.
He's already proven he's no killer.

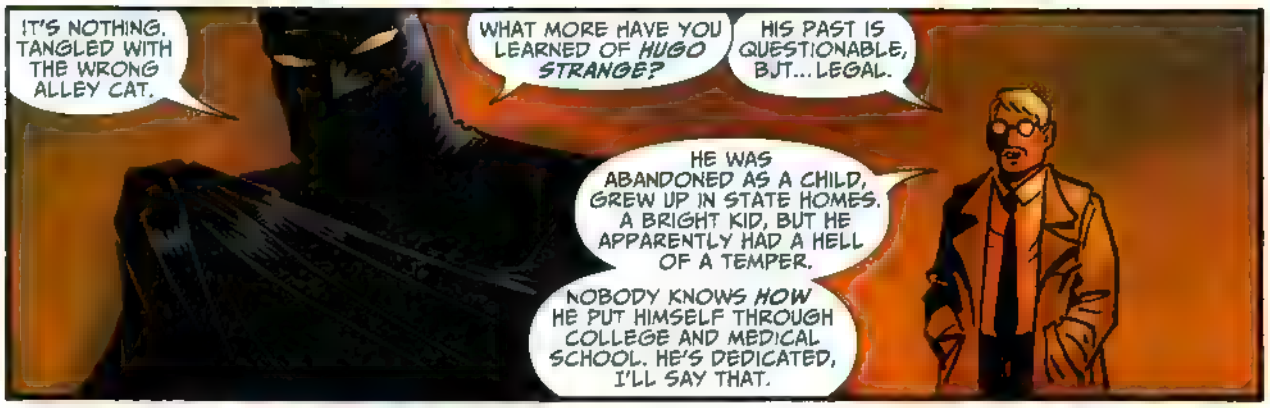
That doesn't stop him from letting the rope slip and jerk as he lowers Briggs to the pavement.
Twelve gut-churning stories below.


On his lips, just the hint of a smile.

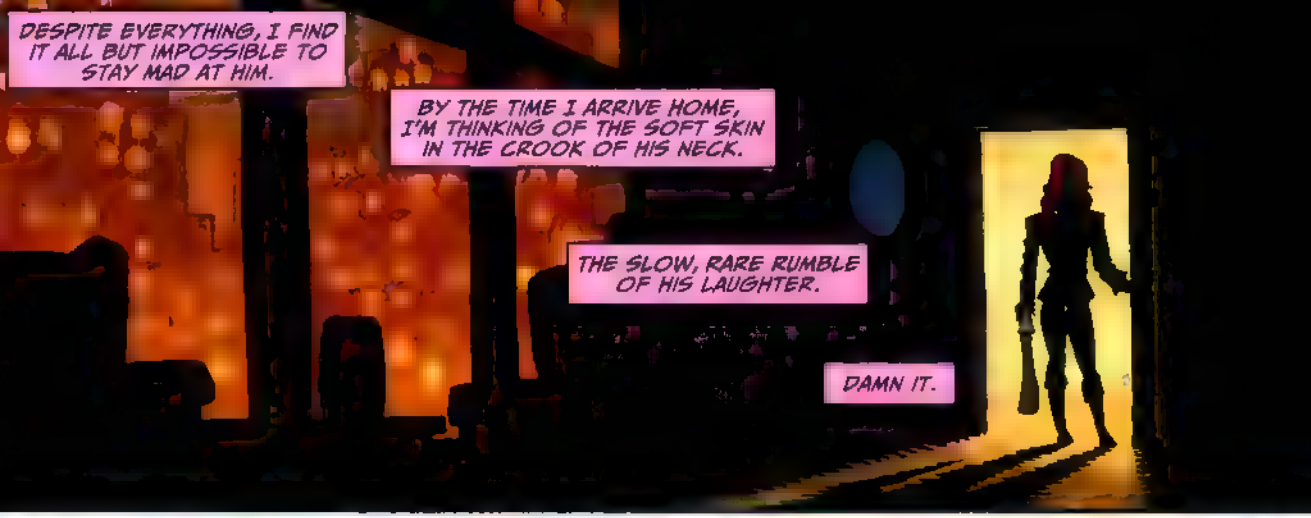
GNN

SORRY I WAS A BIT LATE. YOU OKAY?
I'VE BEEN WORSE. THANKS.
The Cat's drug still swirls inside me.


WHOA! THE QUESTION IS...ARE YOU OKAY? STEADY, MAN...
I'M...FINE. JUST--
Lucky fool. Taking on armed men with a head full of who knows what...
SO, WHERE'D YOU GET THAT?


IT'S NOTHING. TANGLED WITH THE WRONG ALLEY CAT.
WHAT MORE HAVE YOU LEARNED OF HUGO STRANGE?
HIS PAST IS QUESTIONABLE, BUT...LEGAL.
HE WAS ABANDONED AS A CHILD, GREW UP IN STATE HOMES. A BRIGHT KID, BUT HE APPARENTLY HAD A HELL OF A TEMPER.
NOBODY KNOWS HOW HE PUT HIMSELF THROUGH COLLEGE AND MEDICAL SCHOOL. HE'S DEDICATED, I'LL SAY THAT.

LOOK, I KNOW I WASN'T QUITE ON BOARD WITH THIS AT FIRST, BUT AFTER SEEING THE STRINGS THE ROMAN HAS PULLED TO HUSH UP WHATEVER HAPPENED AT HIS COUNTRY ESTATE...
...AT THIS POINT ALL WE CAN DO IS KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON STRANGE. IF HE STEPS OUT OF LINE, MAYBE WE CAN NAIL HIM ON SOMETHING.
VERY WELL.
BUT THAT ISN'T WHY I CALLED YOU HERE TONIGHT.
SOMETHING...NEW HAS CROPPED UP THAT I'D LIKE YOU TO SEE.
WE NEED TO GO DOWN TO THE MORGUE.


DESPITE EVERYTHING, I FIND IT ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO STAY MAD AT HIM.
BY THE TIME I ARRIVE HOME, I'M THINKING OF THE SOFT SKIN IN THE CROOK OF HIS NECK.
THE SLOW, RARE RUMBLE OF HIS LAUGHTER.
DAMN IT.

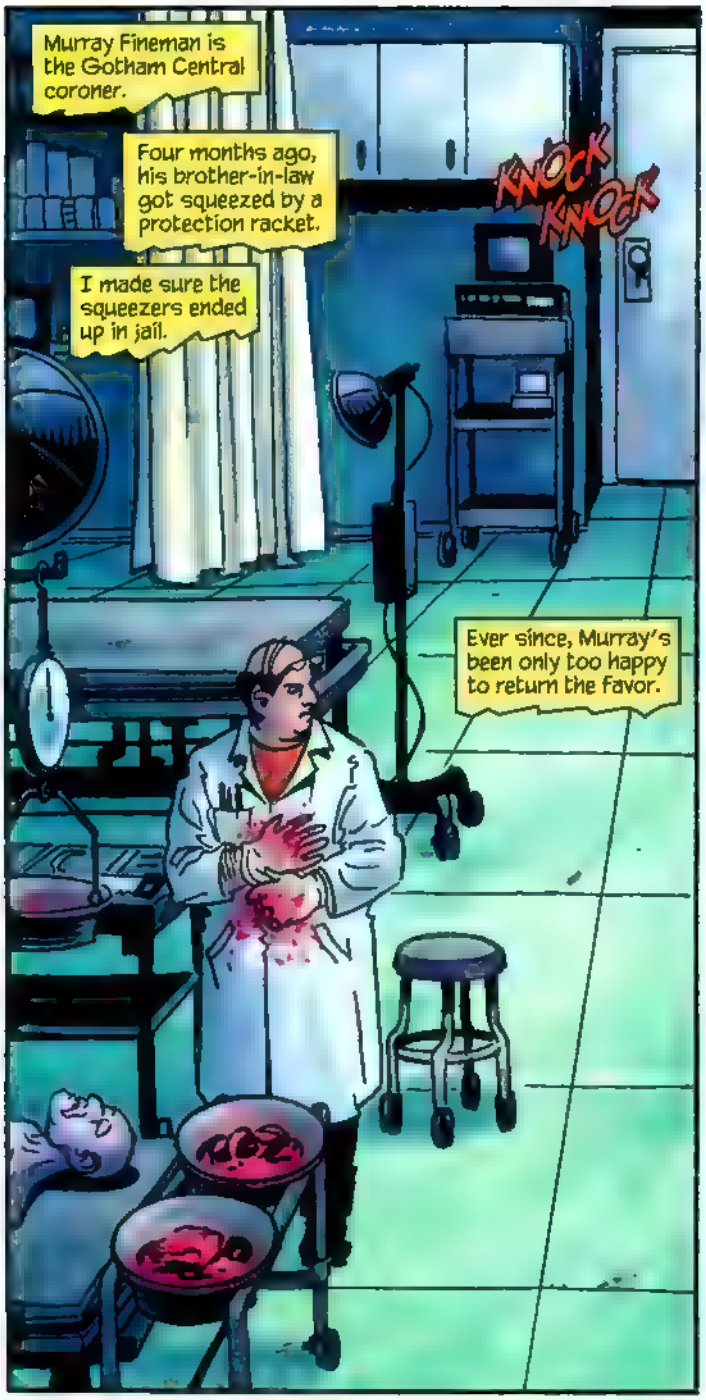
KLK-KLK-KLK
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE LIGHTS?

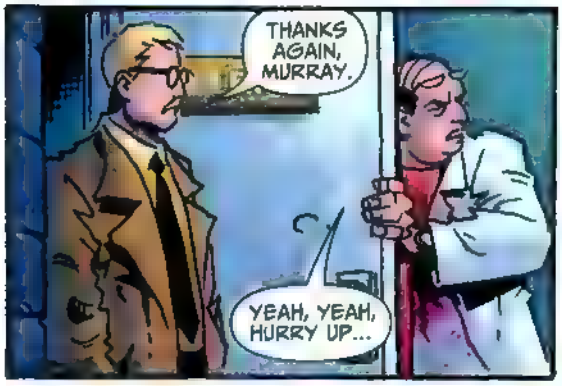
LOOKS LIKE DADDY'S STILL UP. HIS STUDY...

DADDY?
HI, I'M HOME! SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE LIGHTS OUT HERE. I'M GOING TO CALL MAINTENANCE--
Nnnh--?
YES. LIGHTS...OUT hr'mmm. YES. I--
DADDY AND I HAVE HARDLY SPOKEN SINCE HE CONFESSED HIS.. CRIMES TO ME.
I HATE TO CALL IT THAT.

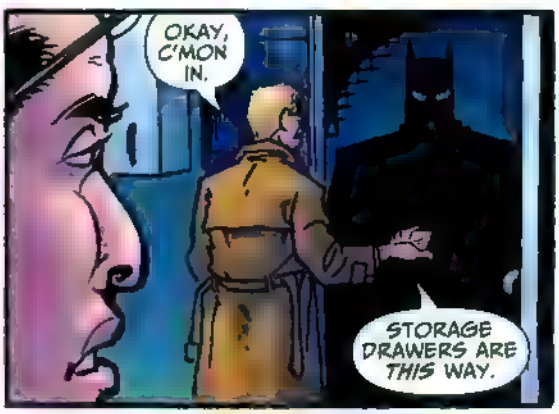
NO! LEAVE THE LIGHTS OUT!
WE NEED TO--NEED TO LAY LOW... ESPECIALLY AT--
-AT NIGHT
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? DADDY...
HOW MUCH HAVE YOU HAD TO DRINK TONIGHT?
NEVER... I--um, DON'T WORRY, DARLING.
I-I SWEAR I'M DOING ALL RIGHT. I'M...I'M DOING FINE.

I KNOW BRUCE HELPED HIM OUT OF THAT JAM.
ALL RIGHT, DADDY. IT'S OKAY. HERE--
I SWEAR...
BUT HE'S APPARENTLY BEEN TOO EMBARRASSED TO EVER TELL ME THAT.
YOU NEED TO GET SOME REST. CAN YOU MAKE IT TO BED OKAY?
I SWEAR I'M FINE...
NEED TO-- NEED TO KEEP THE LIGHTS OFF, THOUGH...
HE'S TOO DAMN PROUD.
BUT THIS BEHAVIOR SEEMS A LITTLE EXTREME.
WHAT'S GOT HIM SO SHAKEN?


Murray Fineman is the Gotham Central coroner.
Four months ago, his brother-in-law got squeezed by a protection racket.
I made sure the squeezers ended up in jail.
KNOCK KNOCK
Ever since, Murray's been only too happy to return the favor.

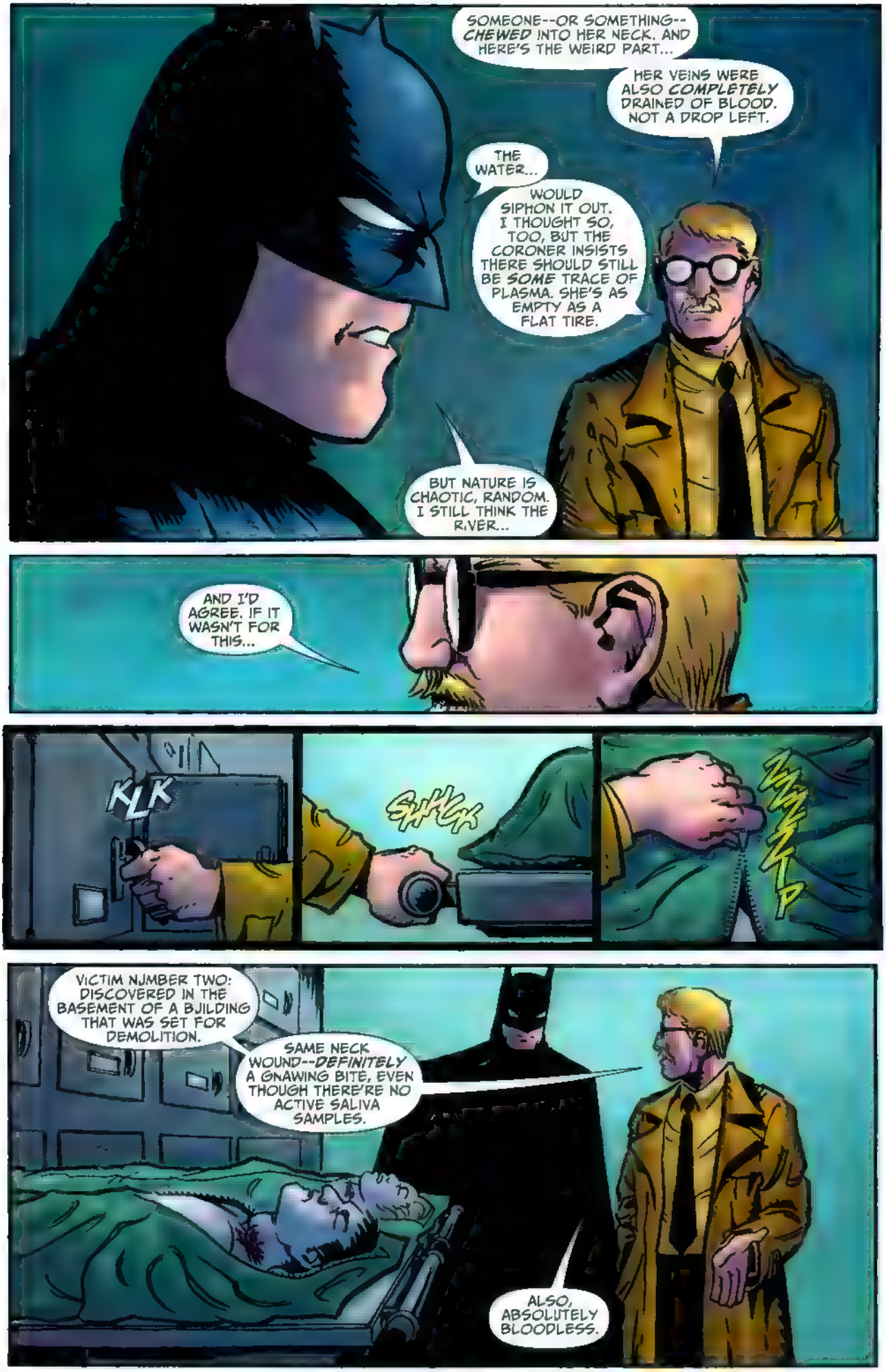

THANKS AGAIN, MURRAY.
YEAH, YEAH, HURRY UP...

LOOK, I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU TEN MINUTES, TOPS. MY LAB ASSISTANT'S ON HIS BREAK.
MORE THAN ENOUGH. 'PRECIATE IT, MUR.


OKAY, C'MON IN.
STORAGE DRAWERS ARE *THIS* WAY.

THE VICTIM WAS FISHED OUT OF THE EAST RIVER.

A TUGBOAT SPOTTED HER. SHE WASN'T IN THE WATER VERY LONG, SO THE BODY'S STILL IN GOOD SHAPE.
SHE'S YOUNG. NO POSITIVE I.D. YET, BUT WE'RE RUNNING HER PRINTS.
ZZZZIP
MANNER OF DEATH... WELL, HAVE A LOOK.
THROAT'S BEEN RIPPED OUT. SEVERED HER JUGULAR. PRETTY RAGGED WOUND...
RIGHT. AT FIRST, THE CORONER THOUGHT THAT WAS DJE TO HER TIME IN THE WATER--THE MARINE LIFE AND ALL.
BUT THEN HE FOUND WHAT LOOKS LIKE BITE GOUGES DEEPER IN THE WOUND, ALONG THE EDGE OF HER TRACHEA.


SOMEONE--OR SOMETHING--CHEWED INTO HER NECK. AND HERE'S THE WEIRD PART...
HER VEINS WERE ALSO COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD. NOT A DROP LEFT.
THE WATER...
WOULD SIPHON IT OUT. I THOUGHT SO, TOO, BUT THE CORONER INSISTS THERE SHOULD STILL BE SOME TRACE OF PLASMA. SHE'S AS EMPTY AS A FLAT TIRE.
BUT NATURE IS CHAOTIC, RANDOM. I STILL THINK THE RIVER...
AND I'D AGREE. IF IT WASN'T FOR THIS...
KLK
SHLCK
ZZZZZP
VICTIM NUMBER TWO: DISCOVERED IN THE BASEMENT OF A BUILDING THAT WAS SET FOR DEMOLITION.
SAME NECK WOUND--DEFINITELY A GNAWING BITE, EVEN THOUGH THERE'RE NO ACTIVE SALIVA SAMPLES.
ALSO, ABSOLUTELY BLOODLESS.

IT SEEMS LIKE SOMEONE'S TAKING THIS WHOLE "CREATURE OF THE NIGHT" BIT EVEN FURTHER THAN YOU.
NICCOLA SAYS THIS CITY'S BLOODLINES ARE WITHERED AND THIN.
HE SAYS WE MUST SEARCH CAREFULLY FOR THE FRESHEST VEINS
ONLY THEN SHALL THE BROTHERHOOD MAKE GOOD ON ITS POTENTIAL.
..AND ACHIEVE THE ETERNAL NIGHT
3RD AVENUE Nite Club
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M STILL COMING TO THIS HOLE!
SAME FACES! SAME CROWD! SAME LAME-ASS MUSIC!
GOD! WHATTA WASTE!
WHY DO YOU COME, THEN? IF YOU HATE IT SO...?
ROUTINE, I GUESS. MOM ALWAYS SAID I WAS HAB TUAL AS A HAMSTER.
SAID IT 'TIL I LEFT FOR GOTHAM.
THANKS
YOU ARE NOT FROM THIS CITY, THEN?
NO, uh...WHAT WAS YOUR NAME?

Uhhh...YEAH. HEY THERE, GORGEOUS--
CRAWL OFF AND DIE, MUTTON.
DALA. MY NAME IS DALA.
THAT'S A FASCINATING ACCENT YOU'VE GOT, DALA... YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT FROM AROUND HERE EITHER. WHERE'S HOME?
I AM FROM A PLACE LONG TORN BY CONFLICT AND STRIFE. I BARELY GOT OUT WITH MY LIFE.
SO, YOUR MOTHER...SHE WAS SAD WHEN YOU LEFT, YES? AND YOUR PAPA, TOO, I AM SURE. WHAT OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?
NADA, DALA. I'M AN ONLY CHILD. THAT'S WHY I GOT OUT.
REEEEALLY?
...FELT LIKE I GREW UP IN A TOMB! I'M SOOO GLAD TO BE FREE OF IT!
REGARDLESS OF ITS TROUBLES, THERE ARE MANY THINGS I STILL MISS ABOUT MY HOMELAND.
THIS SCENT, FOR INSTANCE. IT IS SPECIALLY MADE FROM VERY...EXOTIC SOURCES. WOULD YOU CARE TO SMELL IT?
THEY KEPT ME SO SHELTERED...
SURE, I GUESS--
THAAAT'S IT! BREATHE DEEEEPLY...

I'M... I... UM...I DON-DON'T... FEEEEL S-SSSO GOOD. ALLUVA...ALLUVA S-S-SUDDDEN!!
AH! IT IS PROBABLY THE FLASHING LIGHTS AND LOUD MUSIC. VERY LOUD!
B-B-BUUUT... I-I ALLLLWAYS—
THESE THINGS ARE BAD! BAD FOR BIORHYTHMS, YES? COME! WE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH FRESH AIR!
OHHHH! OOOOOO-KAY! IFFFFF... YOU-YOU SAY SSSOOO--
MY FRIEND, SHE IS FEELING ILL. WE ARE TAKING HER INTO THE NIGHT...
WHATEVER...
B-BUUUUT, D-D-DALAAA? WH-WH-WHERE... RRRRRR WE GOIN'? I D-DOOOHN...
JUST A BIT OF A STROLL. THE EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOUR BLOOD! LOTS OF OXYGEN...
B-BUT IT'S SOOO...SOOO C-C-COLD!! I-I'M C-COLD!
AN-NND... WH-WHY IS TH— IS THE MOON ALL RED?!
COME ALONG, DARLING. NOT MUCH FARTHER, NOW...

D-DALL-LA? WH-WHERE ARE WE?! WH-WHOOO RRRR THEEESE--?!
HERE SHE IS. THIS IS THE ONE. QUICKLY NOW...
I'M-- I'NOT--I-- UNHHHHH...
SHE WILL SLEEP FOR SEVERAL HOURS. WE MUST SUMMON THE REST OF THE BROTHERHOOD.
TONIGHT, THE BLOOD MOON SHALL BE FILLED.
NIZZLA WILL BE PLEASED.
TO BE CONTINUED

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Scenes from the big San Diego softball match between Marvel and DC... and before you ask the score, remember, it's not whether you win or lose.... I think these pictures say it all.

dan didio

DC NATION

For a complete list of this week's titles, sneak peeks, breaking news and more, visit us at dccomics.com

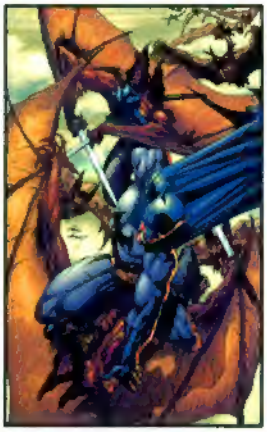
Next in...

BATMAN: THE MAD MONK #2

The next issue sucks! Literally! Batman must evade the bloodthirsty fangs of the deadly Mad Monk!

THE HOT LIST THIS WEEK

52 #16



BATMAN #656

SECRET SIX #4

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